

## SMALL THORNS

The odor from garbage my neighbor  
burns in a trash barrel corrupts  
the fresh breath of morning and  
I find the curtain of silence easily  
torn at night by a barking dog, and  
my taste runs to bird song early  
Sunday morning rather than the blasts  
from a neighbor's lawn mower and  
I have never subscribed to the steel  
fences built to keep kids from  
homesteading vacant lots. But we  
neighbors know we must bear with  
each other for it is the small thorns  
that prick tempers and lame the feet  
of good will. Yet no one, I repeat,  
no one gives us directions of how  
to change things as they are.

-- James Hearst

Cedar Falls IA

THE MYSTERY OF THE MASS DROWNING  
OF THE SENIOR CLASS OF HOYLE HIGH  
SCHOOL HERETOFORE UNEXPLAINED  
FINALLY AND CONCLUSIVELY SOLVED

But, Ma, everybody's got one

And I suppose if everybody  
went and jumped into the river

Q. WHERE CAN I MEET GIRLS?

A. LAUNDROMATS ARE FULL OF THEM.

Sure enough. One makes  
change. Another puts it in  
for me. A third stands by  
the bulletin board: FREE TO GOOD HOME.

A blonde pops out after the spin  
cycle blowing delicately on my

shorts. Inside the dryer, a dark-haired beauty is shouting, "Viva revolution!"

Panting, I bolt the bathroom door, sigh of relief catching in my teeth as I hear behind me the gurgle and turning see the smile behind the snorkel.

#### BULL'S EYE

She got all the ducks, bears, windmills, pendulums. She rang all the bells. Lined up in front of her were goldfish, coasters, vases, sets of pilsner glasses, teddies, Snoopies. "That's all folks," said the man in the KNAVISH SHOWS T-shirt to the shooter plus the hundreds who had swarmed in behind her. "All gone," he added to the empty shelves and riddled gallery. "Really," he assured everyone as the rifle came up and the crowd began to heave, "there's nothing left to execute," beginning to dart back and forth in a crouch.

#### SLEEPING BEAUTY

When the word went out, the princes began to show up. The first tried a few pecks, shrugged and wandered off. Another couple pried her jaws open and got down to work. Some liked her a lot and had to be dragged out by the guards. One or two really let her have it, so when Prince C. did show up she was slightly bruised, a little puffy and very damp. "Not this mini-monarch," he said backing out. But even his voice worked a kind of magic, waking her just enough to enroll at the state college, graduate in three years and get a job as a high school English teacher.

#### PLUS ÇA CHANGE

Remember how it was supposed to be in the mashed potatoes and some boy from the East painted such a vivid picture of big Baptist cooks dumping it